Michigan City

II. Project Abstract
Briefly (500 words maximum) describe the proposed project clearly and concisely using the space provided.

The purpose of this project is to improve instructional effectiveness by promoting the use of technology in teaching and embracing innovative instructional strategies and technologies. This will be accomplished through the use of multiple forms of technology in the 6th grade classroom. By improving our instruction, students will become engaged and motivated. When students are actively engaged they are more likely to have better attendance, which will increase their changes for academic success.

Our project proposal supports the following four goals:

- Improve student academic achievement through the use of technology
- Assist students in becoming technology literate
- Encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with professional development
- Cultivate communication, collaboration and accountability among students, teachers, and parents.

The core content classrooms, math, science, language arts and reading, will be equipped with 60 inch plasma screens, audio enhancement, document camera, tablet pc, Avocent transmitter/receiver system, student response systems and portable student slates. Michigan City Area Schools (MCAS) currently has a robust wireless and fiber network that can support voluminous Internet usage, streaming video, pod and video casting, etc. Teachers will receive ongoing professional development and support to use the equipment and integrate technology into instruction.

The plasma screen and audio enhancement system will allow students to better see and hear the instructional content. The document camera will allow the teacher to display dimensional objects and enlarge print so students can easily view it on the plasma screen. The teacher tablet will allow teacher mobility in the classroom as well as the control panel for the technology pieces. The Avocent transmitter/receiver system enables the wireless components to work. The student response system will allow students to respond to teacher directed or print based questions so that the teacher can check for understanding and re-teach at the moment of instruction. The portable student slates will allow students to notate to the plasma screen during instruction. These technology pieces will be permanently integrated into the classroom environment. Hardware will be installed during the summer with professional development to follow. By having technology pieces wired and ready to use, teachers can access multimedia resources without classroom interruption or down time while equipment is rolled in and readied for use.

MCAS has recently built a new elementary school with these technology components, referred to as High Tech Education Classrooms (HiTEC). HiTec teachers realize that the infusion of technology and accessibility has enhanced instruction and engaged students in learning. Technology integration has become seamless.

Professional development (PD) will be provided after school during scheduled weekly meetings (face-to-face training), as needed to support instruction (just in time learning) and scheduled workshops. PD will include instruction for using the new equipment and modifying lessons to integrate technology. The focus of PD will be to instruct the teachers to use the new equipment, access new resources that integrate technology into instruction, provide students with differentiated instructional activities using multi-media and develop lessons so that students interact positively with technology.